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ABSTRACT

Since this is an age of international interdependence and even those growing up in small rural communities are not insulated against spill-over effects of global events, rural students should be exposed to world affairs and prepared for citizenship in the global community. Resources for organizing instructional activities to affect the global perspective of students can be found in typical school/community libraries: encyclopedias, novels, histories, travel publications, and newspapers. Many media resources can be obtained at minimal cost. The Proactive Action Model (perception--thought pattern--action) can be used to involve students directly in simulated activities which expose them to and involve them in critical thinking and decision making. Students can role-play as delegates in a model United Nations session, which can involve both students and teachers in research and organization. Topics of international importance, such as acid rain, Palestinian refugees, and nuclear waste disposal, can be discussed and debated, and students can issue final policy statements. The importance of the model United Nations to the development of global perspectives among students in rural schools is that these students gain opportunities to participate directly in learning activities which are informative, enriching, and fun. Fourteen resource organizations are listed. (MH)

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DEVELOPING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ABOUT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AMONG PROACTIVE ACTION STUDENTS IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Richard Peters, Ed.D.

GLOBAL HORIZONS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Richard Peters is Founder and Projects Director of GLOBAL HORIZONS: The Center for Applied Eco/Social Studies.

Since 1970, Dr. Peters has been directly involved with the development/delivery/evaluation of elementary/secondary environmental education and global studies programs.

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS (SEA) PROGRAM

PEOPLE IN THEIR ENVIRONMENTS (PIE)

HUMANS AND ENVIRONMENT LEARNING PROGRAM (HELP)

From 1973 - 1978, Dr. Peters was administrator/director of an NIE funded EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS (ES) project in northern New Hampshire. This project was one of ten, nationwide, to conduct R+D in rural communities re: the educational change process.

Dr. Peters has been a past member of the NCSS Curriculum Advisory Committee; was a 1982 recipient of a Fulbright Grant to study culture/history in India; and is currently a member of the NCSS International Activities Committee (1984 - 1986).

THE CENTER FOR APPLIED ECO/SOCIAL STUDIES

No matter where one lives, today, he/she is indirectly/directly involved with/in the world -- on a global scale. Both perceived and non-perceived global events, as well as military and political decisions, do have dramatic effect(s) upon our daily lives. Simply because one lives in a small rural community does not mean nor guarantee that the individual is insulated against the spill-over effects of global events. Thus, there is a need for those students growing up in rural communities to be exposed to the world about them, and to prepare themselves for citizenship within the global community.

"Developing an awareness and understanding of the world"

PERSPECTIVE

In order to successfully function as a global citizen, the individual must possess keen insight into/knowledge about the cultural/economic/military/political/social relationships among sovereign nations.

Today, no nation is an island unto itself. Each nation is dependent upon others -- in some way(s) -- for its economic/military/political/social well-being. We live in an age not of national independence but rather of international interdependence. Humans must learn to coexist within the framework of global cooperation rather than attempt to survive within the context of adversary alignments; EAST/WEST for example.

WE, as a species, must realize that survival in a nuclear age is totally dependent upon mutual cooperation, respect, and trust -- within the global community of nations.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

If nations are to exhibit mutual cooperation, respect, and trust vis-a-vis policies/practices of international relations, the foundation for such behavior is to be found among the masses of people who inhabit the earth -- at any given time.

That 'foundation' is the level of global citizenship sophistication exhibited by the people -- in any/all the nations. In rural and urban communities, alike, typical citizens must be concerned about the plight of all fellow humans, must be alert to the numerous attacks upon the character and quality of natural environments, and must be willing to commit themselves to action -- whenever action is called for.

CREATING GLOBAL CITIZENS

A global citizen is one who perceives the world about him/her, and is committed to act in a positive manner; to champion a cause, to right a wrong, and to safeguard the global lifespace of humans and other creatures alike. In short, the global citizen is a modern-day LONE RANGER type.

This commitment to improve/protect the quality of life for every living creature demands that each and every individual be aware of, concerned about, and committed to international policies/programs. The committed global citizen is willing to 'go-the-extra-mile' to safeguard the world -- not merely his/her own home, community, state or nation.

In some instances, global citizens must work to maintain the status quo, and at other times (depending upon the circumstances of a given situation) they must serve as agents for change.

DEVELOPING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

The process of creating global citizens is lifelong, but it must be planned for/nurtured in the elementary/secondary school grades.

This process, and the organized instructional programs which comprise it, can be found in small rural schools as well as in large urban/suburban schools. It can be inaugurated, implemented, and institutionalized within limited budgets (and within school systems having limited resources/staffs) as well as within budgets allowing for a variety of instructional materials, field trips, and the hiring of staffs.

Very little expense is required to organize instructional activities to affect the global perspectives of students. Most resources can be found in typical school/community libraries.

Encyclopedias provide a basic source of background data;

Novels provide 'color' by enriching basic data;

Histories develop time sequence perspectives and explain why certain cultures act/react in particular ways;

Travelogue-type publications (such as NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC) expose students to the diversity/uniqueness of cultures/nations in both print and graphic forms;

Newspapers provide up-to-date information re: contemporary issues and the policy positions of selected nations.

Media presentations (films, filmstrips, slides, and video tapes) depicting lifestyles in selected nations, as well as providing background information about diverse cultures, can be integrated into the instructional process at the elementary/secondary grades. Again, the cost of these materials can be minimal. Many films are available to rural schools on a free loan basis. The school merely pays the return postage on each film used. One such free loan film service (including selected filmstrips/cassettes and video tapes) is TALKING MOTION PICTURE SERVICE, St. Petersburg, Florida.

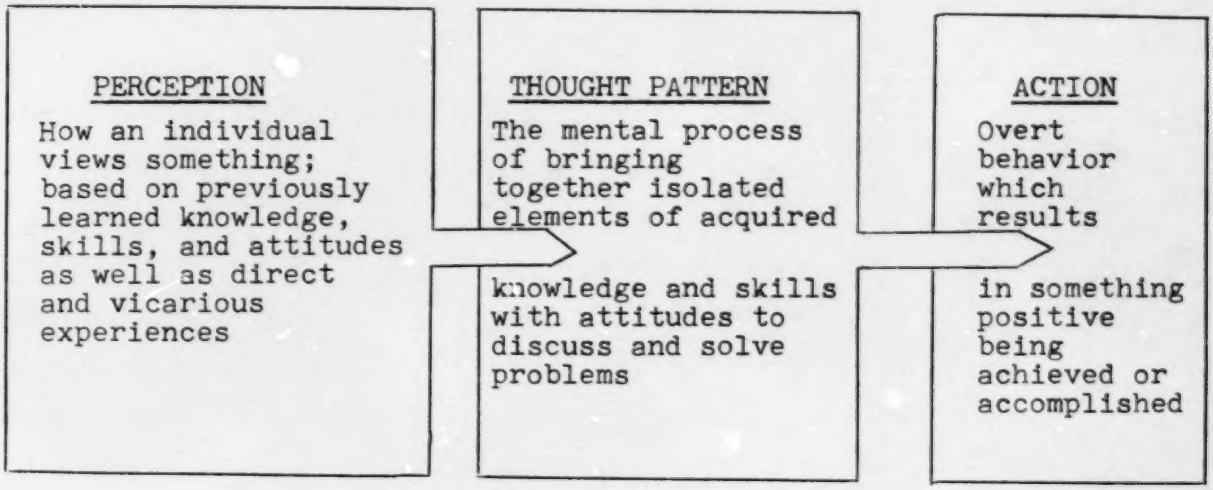
Other valuable sources of free/inexpensive materials are the embassies of selected nations within the United States, and the United Nations in New York City.

After being exposed to the sights, sounds, and histories of selected nations, students are ready to begin critical thinking and decision making within the context of carefully developed simulations.

ROLE PLAYING AND DECISION MAKING

The internalized sense of commitment to international issues which characterizes the global citizen is developed, over time, through a series of planned activities incorporated into a learning scheme which is applicable in rural as well as urban schools.

The scheme discussed herein is the PROACTIVE ACTION MODEL (PAM) developed and field tested by this author since 1972.


PERCEPTION
How an individual views something; based on previously learned knowledge, skills, and attitudes as well as direct and vicarious experiences
THOUGHT PATTERN
The mental process of bringing together isolated elements of acquired knowledge and skills with attitudes to discuss and solve problems
ACTION
Overt behavior which results in something positive being achieved or accomplished

Using PAM, students can be directly involved in simulated activities which expose them to/involve them with critical thinking and decision making.

Students can role play delegates to a MODEL UN session. They can be assigned to specific nations, can participate in committee/bloc meetings, prepare resolutions for debate, participate in Security Council deliberations, and debate international issues in General Assembly meetings.

There is little expense required to organize a MODEL UN session, and it can take place in any size school setting. The importance of creating a MODEL UN simulation is to directly involve students in its organization/planning, development, and presentation.

ORGANIZING A MODEL UN

Once it has been decided that the typical rural junior/senior high school; grades seven through twelve, will present a MODEL UN session, students and teachers, alike, must be organized into work/study groups.

1. Several nations are selected to be represented at the UN session.
2. A prescribed number of students are assigned to represent each selected nation.
3. Students acting as UN delegates from each nation conduct small group research; to gather background data and to familiarize themselves with their nation.

4. Delegates prepare resolutions to be presented to the several committees and to the General Assembly -- for debate and adoption.

The President of the General Assembly is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of this international body.

Each nation is entitled to make and display a national flag -- so long as it meets prescribed dimensions. Delegates may also dress in native costumes.

Adhering to Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure, each nation has the opportunity to express its views and to be heard by other member nations. Disruptions are not tolerated during the proceedings of the General Assembly or committee meetings.

When the General Assembly is not in session, delegations are assigned to committee/bloc meetings. Herein, resolutions are presented and debated. Many resolutions are accepted and forwarded to the General Assembly for further discussion, while others are rejected within committees.

Sample Resolutions

Committee: Environment

Subject: Acid Rain and Pollution Control

Submitted By: Finland

Realizing that acid rain is causing serious damage in Europe;

Further realizing that Finland's major industry is forestry;

Noting that acid rain is largely due to the fact that there is a lack of pollution controls on industry throughout the world;

Resolve that stricter mandatory laws should be put into effect to reduce air pollution and acid rain throughout the world.

Suggested that:

1. large scale filtering of all air polluting industries;
2. pollution control devices such as catalytic converters be installed on all motor vehicles.

Committee: Political Issues

Subject: Palestinian Refugees

Submitted By: Jordan

Recognizing that a viable solution must be found to the Palestinian refugee problem;

Further recognizing that the Palestinians live in the West Bank; that one-half of Jordan's population is Palestinian; and that the West Bank was captured in the 1967 war by Israel and is rightfully part of Jordan;

Affirms that Jordan pay the salaries and pensions of West Bank officials; that inhabitants of the West Bank be represented in the Jordanian Parliament; and that Jordanian laws be in effect in the West Bank;

Reaffirms that the Palestinians have a right to self determination.

Resolve that:

1. the Palestinians must be allowed to freely exercise their right to self determination;
2. Israel withdraw from the territories occupied in the 1967 war;
3. an independent Palestinian state be created in the West Bank.

Committee: Environment

Subject: High-level Nuclear Waste Disposal

Submitted By: Portugal

Noting with concern that many nations are generating high-level nuclear wastes with no facilities for permanent disposal;

Further noting that these wastes are highly radioactive and will remain so for tens-of-thousands of years;

Realizing that many solutions to this problem are being researched by the individual nations, but also realizing that no permanent solution has yet been found;

Emphasizing that this is a problem of global concern which should be approached with cooperation among all nations;

Resolves that:

1. a study be undertaken to investigate the research done to date by the several nations;

2. undertake an independent research study -- with the cooperation of member nations;

3. an equitable solution be found that will satisfy the needs of all the nations involved, and provide for a safer permanent method of disposing of nuclear wastes.

USING PAM: HIGH-LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL

In the MODEL UN resolution on page ten, Portugal has proposed an international agreement to safely dispose of high-level nuclear waste material. How will this issue be resolved?

Delegates to the MODEL UN session use the PROACTIVE ACTION MODEL to deliberate the issue and to arrive at an agreeable solution.

The PAM Process

PERCEPTION: How an individual views something; based on previously learned knowledge, skills, and attitudes as well as direct and vicarious experiences.

THOUGHT PATTERN: The mental process of bringing together isolated elements of acquired knowledge and skills with attitudes to discuss and solve problems.

ACTION: Overt behavior which results in something positive being achieved or accomplished.

P E R C E P T I O N

Unless efforts are made to carefully dispose of high-level nuclear waste material, the world will be faced with a serious problem. Unless there is a safe way to permanently dispose of high-level nuclear waste material, these materials will be haphazardly and indiscriminately discarded; resulting in the poisoning of the land and water -- and eventually all life forms on earth! Humans and other life forms will suffer irreparable harm if a solution to this perplexing global problem is not found -- and soon.

T H O U G H T P A T T E R N

There is a need for an international effort to safely dispose of high-level nuclear waste material. Delegates from the several nations attending the MODEL UN session present resolutions and debate each in committee meetings and in the General Assembly.

Following the debates, the delegates agree upon a resolution which is adopted by the MODEL UN .

A C T I O N

The Committee On The Control And Safe Disposal Of High-Level Nuclear Waste Material presents its resolution to the General Assembly of the MODEL UN .

The resolution is debated in the General Assembly .

A vote is taken in the General Assembly .

If the resolution is adopted by the majority of General Assembly members, then a policy statement is issued .

STATEMENT

As stated herein, students in rural schools can be exposed to and involved with global studies at a minimal expense to the school system. The key ingredient in this process of awareness/exposure/involvement is imagination ! In short, a lot can be done with little.

If students cannot be taken on field trips -- then sound/film simulations will do; if students cannot come face-to-face with guest speakers from foreign lands -- then films/filmstrips/slides/video tapes will have to do; and if students have not gained direct exposure to foreign lands -- then graphic materials from the library will have to do. Vicarious experiences can provide exposure and enrichment to rural school students who cannot gain direct exposure to the global community.

The importance of MODEL UN to the development of global perspectives among students in rural schools is that these students gain opportunities to directly participate in learning activities which are informative, enriching, and fun!

In today's world, there is a need for rural school students to be as sophisticated in the knowledge of the world about them -- as are the students who live in urban areas.

R E S O U R C E S

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